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NURSING IN MISSION STATIONS

DOES CHINA NEED NURSES?

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I have been much interested in reading what people in America think are the opportunities for the nurse in China and thought perhaps you would like to hear from some one who has been here for a number of years in the midst of things. It is not a question of need. China has needed the nurse for five thousand years, but she did not realize the fact, neither did the people who came over to help her, until within the last few years. Now is the day for the nurse in the mission field, and especially in China. When I came to China I was told that China did not need and was not ready for nurses. After a day in the hospital and a few visits out into the homes, I decided there were few things that China did need as much as nurses.

The first thing that any one who comes to work in China ought to do is to get the language, and this is especially important for medical people. If a student does not understand a problem in arithmetic or a question in literature there is no great harm done, but if the doctor or nurse do not understand all the symptoms, or if the patient does not understand the instructions, a life may be the price paid. First get the language of the people. The better you understand it the more successful your work will be.

During my first year in China I wrote to the president of the China Medical Association, asking about nurses' work in China. He answered that as yet there was no organized nurses' work, but that he hoped the nurses would soon be organized. My letter was printed and sent to every medical person in China. We soon found that nurses were of one opinion about united work, but distances and limited means of travel made it difficult to hold meetings. In 1909, the Nurses' Association of China was organized with Mrs. Hart of Wuhu, a graduate nurse, as president. There had been many local words used for "nurse" but at the Hankow meeting in 1910, the Terminology Committee reported the word for nurse and it has since been accepted by the Nurses' Association of China. Annual meetings were held, but during the summer of 1912, because so many nurses were together on account of the

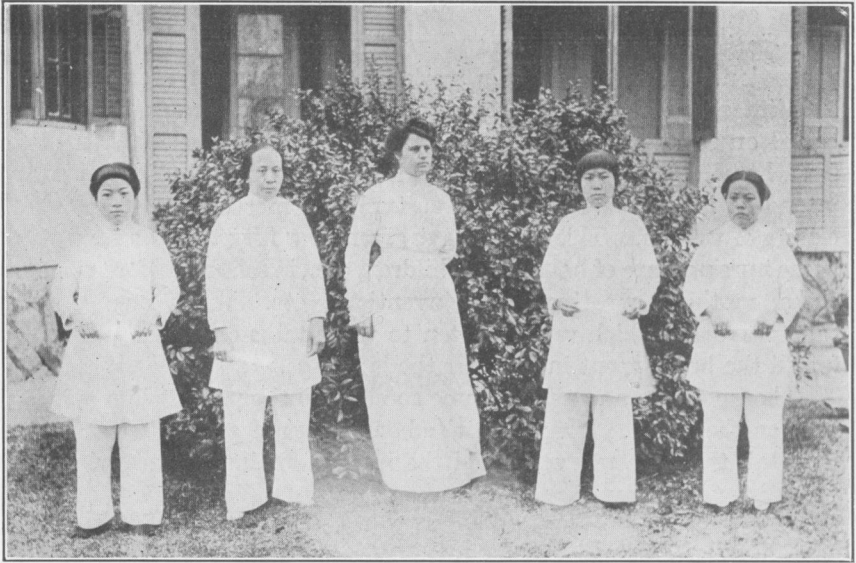
Chinese Revolution, very helpful and enthusiastic meetings were held at Kuling. A course of study and examinations for nurses' training schools were drawn up and later presented to the Medical Association in Peking and since then a joint committee of nurses and doctors has completed the work.

Most nurses in China are very enthusiastic about the Association work. In this province we have the Fuhkien Branch of the Nurses' Association of China with a membership of about thirty. While we do not as yet have a magazine, we do have a department in the *China Medical Journal*, where we can have our reports, etc., printed and discussed. Some of the books we have in Chinese are Hampton Robb's *Principles and Practice of Nursing*; *Nursing in Abdominal Surgery and Diseases of Women*, Fullerton; *The Roller Bandage*, Hopkins; Porter's *Physiology*; *Till the Doctor Comes*; *Military Hygiene*; a *Treatise on Bacteria*, a *Manual of Nursing for Probationers*, and a small book on *materia medica*; some books on sanitation and a fine English-Chinese Medical Dictionary. Dock's *Materia Medica* and an English text-book on nursing are being prepared. Many charts and helps are ready with many books that can be used as reference books in a nurse's library. To be sure most of the class-room work has to be given in lecture form, but I believe before long we shall be well supplied with nursing literature.

The Chinese women are at liberty to study any profession they choose and in the new Republic have equal rights with men in matters of education. Nurses' training schools are being opened all over China. To be sure many of them are not up to the standard we desire, but these are days of beginnings in China, and we do not forget how very few years nursing has been known in America and England.

My work has been in Foochow. Our old hospital was the first hospital for women in China, but this year we are building a new three-story brick building on the old site and as far as I know it will be the largest hospital for women in the country. Beside this we have a new isolation hospital where some fifty patients can be accommodated. We have fifteen nurses in training and expect to raise the number to twenty-five or thirty in the near future. There are two physicians connected with this hospital and we also have a Chinese young woman who will soon graduate from the Union Medical College in Peking and return to us.

The training school was organized in 1909 and the first class was graduated this year. The school colors are blue and white. At the graduation exercises the school colors were used in the decorations mingled with Oriental ferns and palms. Bishop Bashford delivered the address and Mrs. Bashford gave the Charge to the Class. After the diplomas and school pins had been presented, an informal recep-



FIRST GRADUATING CLASS OF THE FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE TRAINING SCHOOL,
FOOCHOW, CHINA

tion was given the graduating class, while refreshments were served. In the evening a dinner was given to the class by the faculty at the hospital home. The nurses wore their simple white uniforms with blue badges. The graduates are all staying this year for the obstetrical course. Our nurses' course extends over a period of three years and only those holding the nurse's diploma can enter for the obstetrical course of one year. The course is practically the same given in American hospitals, only more attention is given to Oriental diseases. Our nurses do all the nursing in the hospital, accompany the doctors to cases during the senior year, do some district nursing under supervision, accompany us on the regular medical trips to the Leper Colony, to the River Boat People, on the country dispensing trips and help in the daily hospital out-clinic. Their hours for recreation and study are in the afternoon and evening. The nurses have cared for some European patients but are not allowed to take cases outside the hospital until after graduation. I have had many calls for nurses to take positions in institutions as schools, orphanages and hospitals and also for private work among the Chinese, but I fear it will be many years before the demand can be supplied, for like nurses in other lands, most of them will find their life work inside the walls of the home.

The Chinese women make kind, conscientious, faithful nurses.

Their calm manner, sunshiny dispositions and their ability to make their patients comfortable and happy insure them great success in their profession. A foreign nurse's work in China is that of teacher and superintendent always. Beside her superintendent's work, she may be called on to care for some poor European who has been taken ill far from home. Beside the training of her own nurses, the foreign superintendent nurse has the great opportunity of meeting and teaching all classes of women. This year I have given over fifty talks on sanitation, home nursing, care of babies and children, etc., in schools, before women's clubs, mothers' meetings, at conventions, etc. When one sees the eagerness with which women listen to these talks one feels well repaid for all the hours spent in learning the language.

Then perhaps no one can come so close to the patient in a spiritual way as the nurse. There are the hours of pain and suffering in the hospital, then the recovery, and the invitations into homes where the nurse is ever welcome and the women of the family are glad to sit and listen as long as one will talk. In the Red Cross, patriotic and improvement societies as well as in the church one has unlimited opportunities to meet these women in a social way and lead them on to higher and better things. It is estimated that there are one million people for every medical person in China so one need not fear of treading on another's toes. The millions of dear babies who die every year because their mothers do not know how to care for them is enough to thrill any nurse's heart. The hundreds of mothers who die in their little dark rooms every day, would live, if China only knew. Cholera, smallpox, plague, diphtheria, scarlet-fever, measles, leprosy, gonorrhea, syphilis, typhus, typhoid and all kinds of eye troubles run riot and are with us all the year round. Consider slavery, ignorance, dirty midwives, narrow vile unkept streets, little dark rooms, no health supervision or inspection, no health laws for isolation or contagion, no sewerage systems, feet bound for ages, bound fast by thousands of years of ignorance and superstition, and you have some idea of the need for nurses in China.

Yes, China is a republic, but that does not make her people any wiser than yesterday. She is free now and eager to learn. Who will be her teacher? The time will soon be past and our opportunities gone forever. Plenty of work, experience never dreamed of, the love of a great people, the privilege of helping to build up in China the profession established by Florence Nightingale, the Queen of all Nurses, more patients than you can dream of caring for and, not least, the approval at last of the Great Physician, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these, ye did it unto me" is the privilege of the nurse in China today. I covet this privilege for you, sister nurses of America, who might be spared to come over and help us.